

Waterfront Actions

Storm Water Pollution Prevention and Source Reduction

What is NAS Alameda doing to protect the waterfront?

Introduction

The Navy is committed to cleaning up and protecting the environment at the Naval Air Station (NAS) Alameda waterfront. This fact sheet explains the Navy's efforts. Examples range from a new prototype treatment system to joint efforts with U.C. Berkeley to develop new methods to clean up contamination. The Navy's past, present and future efforts will protect the San Francisco Bay.

How Does NAS Alameda's Effort Fit into the Big Picture?

Past

What's Been Done Until Now?

In 1972, the Clean Water Act (CWA) made major changes in the release of pollutants to San Francisco Bay. Discharge of industrial waste water was stopped. Treatment was required before waste water could be sent to municipal

(city) treatment plants. Direct release to the Bay was limited.

At Alameda, the Navy took action in the 1970s by rerouting any industrial waste water going through storm drains to new treatment plants on base before sending it to the East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) for final treatment. It worked. San Francisco Bay has become cleaner. However, more environmental measures are needed to finish the job.

Present

What's Being Done Now?

Local Bay Area governments have recently taken steps to let their communities know that the water in storm drains goes directly to the Bay, by painting a picture of a fish at storm drain openings along public streets. Also, bill boards in the community inform people that household chemicals should be kept out of storm drains.

Similarly, NAS Alameda has a program on base that controls "storm water runoff." What is this?

It is a rainwater that flows over the land. Along the way it can pick up debris and pollutants. Storm drains then deposit this runoff in the Bay. NAS Alameda has a permit managed by EBMUD to control storm water runoff. Key elements of the program are inspections, repairs, and reducing pollution at the source.

Inspections and Repairs

The Navy conducts three types of inspections-- Annual, dry weather and wet weather:

1) The annual inspection identifies areas of pollution on the ground. We look at housekeeping improvements like making sure the drip pans under engine repair work are large enough to prevent oil from spilling on the ground.

2) We do dry weather inspections where we check for other pollutants getting into the storm drains. For example, we check to see if water from airplane washing goes into the storm drain. If so, we look for equipment, such as sumps, to remove these pollutants.

3) We inspect monthly during the rainy season between October and April. We look for floating materials, oil or odors in storm water runoff. This tells us how good our program is.

In addition, we also repair pollution treatment systems when needed, like cleaning out an oil/water separator to prevent spills onto the ground.

Reducing Pollution at the Source

The Navy is actively taking steps to reduce pollution sources. Prevention measures include training workers on how to correctly dispose of chemicals used in their work.

NAS Alameda has also started up a new and improved system for treating bilge water from

ships. It is one of three prototypes in California. "Bilge water" is water that collects in the bilge (underwater portion) of a ship. Water in the bilge can pick up oil and grease from the machinery it comes in contact with. This new system, called the "Bilge and Oily Water Treatment System", reduces the pollution released to the Bay. Water treated through this system is sent to EBMUD, under a permit, for final treatment.

Future

Cleanup Actions at NAS Alameda

The on-base cleanup of soil and groundwater (water directly below the land surface), as well as the waterfront, is done under the Navy's Installation Restoration Program (IRP). Under this program, the Navy will continue to get new cleanup and pollution prevention plans in motion. These cleanup plans will deal with pollution that was released before the Clean Water Act was passed.

For example, the Navy has a plan to remove any pollution that might remain in the storm drains from the days when industrial waste water was still discharged through some of them. This work is planned to be completed by November 1995, prior to the start of the next rainy season.

Further Investigations

The IRP is also doing careful studies on how the ecology of the bay and land may be affected by the pollution. They have looked into the amount of polluted sediment in some parts of the Bay. "Sediments" are a mixture of soil, dirt, and other debris from a variety of sources that gets into the Bay water and sinks down to rest on the floor of the Bay. Some of the pollution found may affect marine life living in the sediments. Because

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other higher forms of life, like fish and birds, depend on these sediment marine life for food, the Navy understands that the quality of the sediment is very important for the well-being of all other Bay wildlife.

The Navy IRP will do additional studies on sediment pollution in the Seaplane Lagoon, the Oakland Inner Harbor, and Western Bayside (See Figure 1). They have also joined forces with scientists at U.C. Berkeley and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory to explore new ways to clean up the sediment pollution they find.

BRAC Cleanup Team
Points of Contact

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Department of Toxic Substances Control

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The Navy is working closely with the California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) in planning the investigations to lead to timely and effective cleanup decisions.

How You Can Get Involved

The Navy implements a community involvement program to ensure that the community's concerns and interests are heard throughout the environmental cleanup process. To learn more about the Navy's environmental program or how you can get involved, contact Sherri Withrow, NAS Alameda Public Affairs Office, at (510)263-3724.

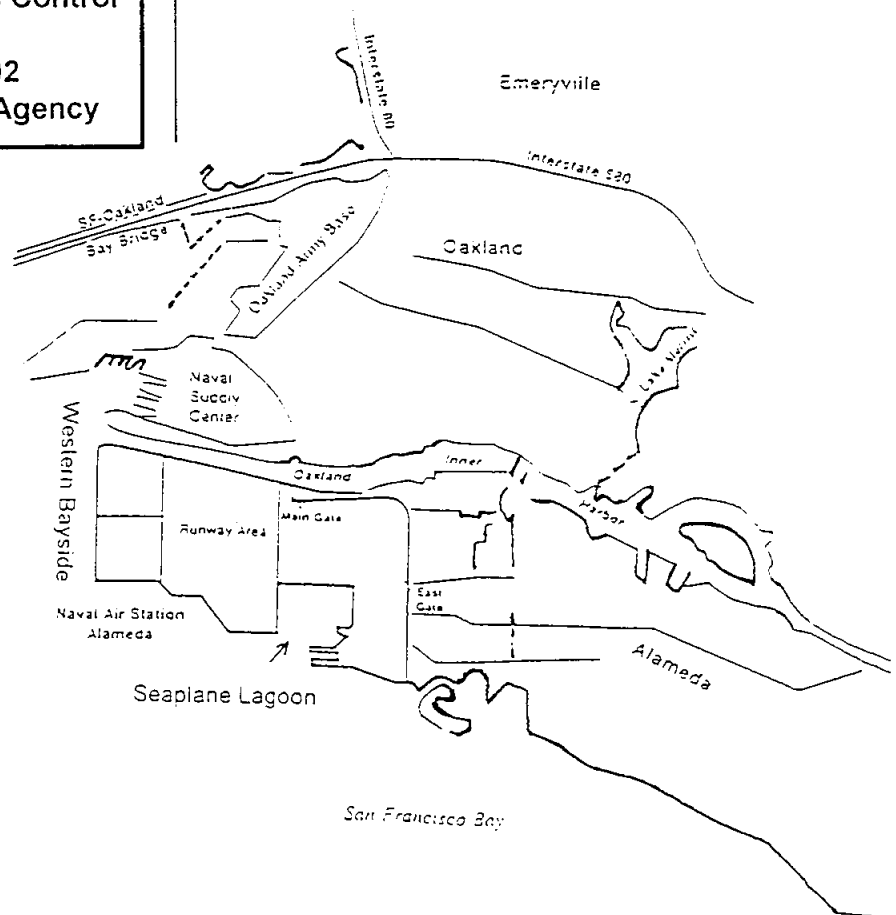


Figure 1
Location Map